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Address delivered at Los
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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT LOS ANGELES, CAL., JULY 3, 1897

BY

HOLDRIDGE O. F. COLLINS,

President of the California Society Sons of the Revolution

AT THE

Commemorative Celebration

OF

CALIFORNIA'S FIRST FOURTH OF JULY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Macaulay says that "a people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors, will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by remote descendants," and Edmund Burke in one of his famous orations has a similar idea in declaring that "those who do not treasure up the memory of their ancestors, do not deserve to be remembered by their posterity."

The Society of Sons of the Revolution, existing in nearly every State and Territory of our country, with an earnest and zealous membership of about 6000 gentlemen, has, as one of its principal objects, the perpetuation of the records of those whose sacrifices of blood and treasure, wrested from the most powerful

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nation of the earth, an empire, whose natal day as an independent sovereignty we celebrate this evening.

Our Society has been charged with being only a didactic exposition of sentimental ideas; that its dominating principles are pride of ancestry and class exclusiveness; that its most important work is devoted to the establishing of a genealogical descent through four or five generations of American progenitors, that we may say we are not as this publican whose father came to us in the steerage.

How far from the truth are these statements, every member of the order knows; and it is my pleasure to tell you something of the practical work already accomplished, and the objects sought by the Sons of the Revolution.

Within the last twenty years more light has been thrown upon the actors of our great struggle for independence than during the previous century, and we now are able to look at them as they were, men who combined with their heroic fortitude all of the passions and frailties of humanity.

We have been accustomed to look upon them with such reverence that we have ceased to regard them as human, like ourselves, but we have placed them upon a pedestal for worship, as being but a little lower than the gods.

Washington himself, whose biographers, Sparks and Irving, found it too dangerous to show in all the phases of this character, is known to have had the passions, frailties and amiable weaknesses of the soldier as well as the civilian.

The exhibition at times of his ungoverned rage appalled his associates, and the army and Congress never for a moment were permitted to lose sight of the fact that in him was the aristocrat in whom was found to an unusual degree the pride of birth and of social environment.

With this grave reserve of the exclusive gentleman, was a forbearance for unintended faults, a kindly consideration for all, and a heart very vulnerable to the softer feelings of our nature.

We know the charming story of how he fell thrall to the loveliness of the beautiful widow, and we may now almost hear him asking himself, in the words of a late writer—"Is it love I feel for this young goddess with yellow hair and light blue eyes, with her moist ripe lips so richly framed for happy love and laughter?"

Shall it be that the heart of the American people will ever cease to thrill with the memory of this happy union of ardent passion and accordant tastes?

That Washington, the man, was loved for those touches of nature which make the whole world kin, is exemplified in the person of your fellow citizen, George Washington Peachy, whom I am proud to present to you this evening as a member of our Society, the son of a private soldier, who endured all the hardships of Valley Forge and participated in the Battles of Princeton, Monmouth and Yorktown.

Mr. Peachy received his name in the veneration engendered in his father's heart through personal contact with that great chief whom he loved as a man while obeying him as a general.

The late discoveries among the musty National and State archives, through the instrumentality of the patriotic hereditary societies of Colonial Wars, Colonial Dames, the Cincinnati, and the Sons and Daughters of the Revolution, have shown, with startling certainty, that most of the vital questions discussed at the present day, pertaining to the government and management of the domestic and foreign affairs of the Nation, were anxiously considered when its foundation stones were laid.

Some of the purposes of the establishment of the Society of Sons of the Revolution, as enunciated in our constitution, are the perpetuation of the "memory of the services of their ancestors and of the times in which they lived, and to inspire the members of the Society with the patriotic spirit of their forefathers."

They have passed away, but their principles survive. Their fight was not for freedom only, but for justice as well, and their descendants, the Sons of the Revolution, not unmindful that they were unable to accomplish all for which they strove, have taken up as part of their work some of the most serious questions which engaged their attention, and which, from time to time, during the last century, like Banquo's ghost, have risen to confront us, which will not down and which must be met.

Our Society literature, our public addresses and our individual efforts, have been for years, and are at the present time, addressed to the subjects of

I.

The taxation of church property.

II

An educational qualification for the electoral franchise; and

III.

Foreign immigration.

One of our members, a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, in an address delivered before the Ohio Society, said :

" It is a notorious violation of the principles of our forefathers when subsidies are granted and taxes exempted in the interest of corporations at the expense of those who have no representation therein. In the City of Baltimore the taxable property amounts to \$209,000,000, while the property exempted is valued at \$215,000,000. The rate of taxation is doubled in the interest of private corporations, in which the people as such, have no voice or representation. In the State of New York a religious corporation, receives from the State by exemption from taxation \$600,000 a year.

Benjamin Franklin said, ' when a religion is good, it will support itself ; and when God does not take care of it, it is a pretty good sign that He does not want it.'

The times call for readjustment of the matter. Corporations whose members have any self-respect should demand it. It is a revolutionary principle and is a legitimate subject for consideration by all who are engaged in the perfection of those principles for which George Washington gave his means, his might and the best years of his life."

This evil prevails to an alarming extent throughout most of the United States, and the untold millions of dollars held and controlled by religious corporations, exempt from all taxation, are a menace to our public prosperity, our domestic peace and to the integrity of the very principles of those religious bodies which have secured such exemption by Constitutional provisions or Legislative enactments.

No one in this audience will take issue with the proposition, urged by the Sons of the Revolution, that the ballot should be permitted to him or her only who knows how to cast it with intelligence.

I make no distinction in this regard between the sexes. Personally I am a believer in female suffrage. The woman of property and intelligence, whose annual taxes are a part of the revenue of the State, should be permitted a voice in the government which she helps to maintain. In denying her a vote we are false to the principles for which our ancestors fought—No taxation without representation.

An educational standard, as well as perhaps a property qualification, should be required from every citizen before he be permitted a voice in the government for the whole.

The subject of unrestricted foreign immigration is one which since the time of Washington has given food for the most anxious thought to our most profound statesmen.

"The first riots in which an intense desire to use firearms and kill was shown, were in 1844, which were begun by foreigners firing into a meeting of native Americans. From this we have gone steadily on, until we now have more rioting, bloodshed and murder in a single year, or even in six months, than can be found in a hundred years of our previous history, and in almost every instance it can be traced to the alien element in our population."

Upon the subject of immigration Washington wrote :

"My opinion with respect to immigration is that, except of useful mechanics and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement. While the policy or advantage of its taking place in a body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned.

"It is not the policy of this country to employ aliens where it can well be avoided either in the civil or military walks of life."

Thomas Jefferson, for the most part, in opposition to the policy of Washington wrote as follows, in referring to immigrants to our shores :

"They will bring with them the principles of the government they leave, imbibed in their early youth, or if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing as is usual from one extreme to another. It would be a miracle were they to stop precisely at the point of temperate liberty. Their principles, with their language, they will transmit

to their children. In proportion to their members they will share with us the legislation. They will inspire into it their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass. If they come of themselves they are entitled to all the rights of citizenship, but I doubt the expediency of inviting them by extraordinary encouragements. I mean not these doubts should be extended to the importation of useful artificers."

You will note the agreement with Washington's statement, "that except of useful mechanics and some particular descriptions of men or professions there is no need of encouragement."

"These Fathers of the Republic were entirely opposed to promiscuous, wholesale immigration. The importation of paupers, vagrants and criminals, together with hundreds of thousands of men and women capable of only cheap manual labor, was altogether foreign to their thoughts; or, if they contemplated it at all, it was only to revolt from it."

Madison, who favored immigration, strenuously insisted that he referred only to the "worthy part of mankind," and in one of his papers he uses these words:

"I am obliged at the same time to say that it is not either the provision of our laws or the practice of the government to give any encouragement to emigrants unless it be in cases where they may bring with them some special addition to our stock of arts or articles of culture."

These are some of the underlying principles upon which the structure, Sons of the Revolution, has been erected. They are the shibboleth of our organization, and we believe them to be the sentiments of the majority of the patriotic American citizens. That there is an honest difference of opinion as to these matters, no one can justly deny, and they will not cease troubling us until they shall be settled by legal enactments.

We welcome to our membership, regardless of social position, pecuniary responsibility, political creed or religious convictions, any reputable citizen, eligible by descent, whether he be the laborer in the fields, the jurist upon the bench, or the highest executive of the land.

The agitation of many of the questions of the time, some of

which strike deep against the foundation of those principles which we believe to be the cause of our present National freedom and happiness, requires a watchfulness which we have sufficient confidence to believe we can exercise.

We take no issue with Chancellor Kent when he says that "he who serves his country well requires not ancestry to make him noble," but we do believe that occasions present themselves at the present day, as they did during the Revolution, when none but Americans should be put on guard.

"The disease of the present day is superiority. There are more saints than niches."

There is too much truth in the remark that "we are all ticketed, not according to what we have. A man of energy in shirt sleeves wins little or no recognition. This sort of estimate too frequently rules in all governments. A minister sends a paltry medal to a sailor who saves a dozen lives at the peril of his own, but he bestows the cross of honor on a deputy who sells him a vote. Woe to the country thus constituted."

Is there not room and a work for such an organization as ours, whose attention is devoted to the conservation of the hereditary principles of this magnificent heritage, and whose greatest pride is the fact, as stated by our General President, Hon. John Lee Carroll, Governor of Maryland, in his last address, that there has never "been a single individual man who has ever been suspected of using or turning to his own personal ends any advantage of his position or what he may obtain as a member of the Sons of the Revolution.

"It is well known that politics, religion, sectional feeling, jealousies of all kinds, are absolutely excluded from our deliberations, and one strong feeling of brotherhood, fraternal brotherhood, extends throughout the length and breadth of the land."

We, particularly, are moved by that most tender of all State papers, Washington's Farewell Address, and our pulses are quickened when we read the calm loving words, "The name of American, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference you have the same religion, manners, habits and politi-

cal principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts—of common dangers, sufferings and successes."

Those who battled for us have gone.

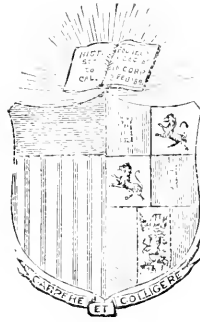
"The knights are dust,
And their good swords are rust.
Their souls are with the saints, we trust."

And the entire land won by them contains less than twenty of their living children, but we, their heritors in the third and fourth generation take up the work, with confidence in its eternal principles of justice, with the courage of patriotism, and an assured belief in our might to keep what they gave.

We honor them for their invincible courage, we glory in their deeds, we reverence them for their fortitude, our hearts are filled with an humble gratitude for the sacrifices made for us; and never, until time shall end, will the American heart cease to respond to the memory of such an ancestry.

"On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead."

July 4th, 1847



July 4th, 1897


The ♦
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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...and the...

CALIFORNIA SOCIETY,
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JULY 3rd, 1897



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